

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 30, line 1 with the following rewritten paragraph:

B2 --Reverse transcription was performed using the total RNA (0.5 µg) extract from the cartilage tissue, and amplication was carried out using an upstream specific primer (5'-TCACTTCGTGGTTTCAGAGC-3') (SEQ ID NO: 21) and a downstream specific primer (5'-TCGTCTTCGCTCTCCTCAAT-3') (SEQ ID NO: 22) that were designed based on the nucleotide sequence of CDEP to obtain a CDEP cDNA fragment. The conditions for the amplication reaction were set to carry out a denaturation reaction (95°C, 1 min), annealing and extension (65°C, 3 min), and 20 cycles of amplication were performed. The resulting DNA was electrophoresed for 15 minutes at 100 V on a 1% agarose gel.--

In the Claims:

Please delete claims 18 and 22-24 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add new claims 25-32 as follows:

25. An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

B2 26. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a fragment that encodes at least ninety amino acids of SEQ ID NO: 2.

27. An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of a DNA sequence complementary to the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

B3 28. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a fragment that is complementary to a nucleic acid which encodes at least ninety amino acids of SEQ ID NO: 2.

29. A method of identifying an agent which modulates at least one activity of a protein comprising the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 comprising the steps of:

(a) exposing cells which express the protein to the agent; and
(b) determining whether the agent modulates at least one activity of said protein, thereby identifying an agent which modulates at least one activity of a protein comprising the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein the activity is regulation of cell differentiation.

31. The method of claim 29 wherein the cell is a human chondrocyte.

sub C5A 32. A kit for identifying a differentiated cell comprising at least one of the following

b3
components:

- (a) any one of the nucleic acids of claims 14-17, 25-29;
 - (b) any one of the proteins of claims 11-13; or
 - (c) an antibody according to claims 19-21.
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